

Chapter 1 : Virginibus Puerisque, by Robert Louis Stevenson

Virginibus Puerisque () was the first collection of Stevenson's essays. Containing what would have been regarded as personal essays in the tradition of Lamb and Hazlitt, the volume brought together essays previously published in the prestigious *Cornhill Magazine* ("Walking Tours" and.

Mercutio, as he was own cousin to Benedick and Biron, would have come to the same end in the long run. Even Iago had a wife, and, what is far stranger, he was jealous. People like Jacques and the Fool in LEAR, although we can hardly imagine they would ever marry, kept single out of a cynical humour or for a broken heart, and not, as we do nowadays, from a spirit of incredulity and preference for the single state. And I take this diffidence as a proof of how sincere their terror is. They know they are only human after all; they know what gins and pitfalls lie about their feet; and how the shadow of matrimony waits, resolute and awful, at the cross-roads. That splendid scoundrel, Maxime de Trailles, took the news of marriages much as an old man hears the deaths of his contemporaries. The fact is, we are much more afraid of life than our ancestors, and cannot find it in our hearts either to marry or not to marry. Marriage is terrifying, but so is a cold and forlorn old age. The friendships of men are vastly agreeable, but they are insecure. You know all the time that one friend will marry and put you to the door; a second accept a situation in China, and become no more to you than a name, a reminiscence, and an occasional crossed letter, very laborious to read; a third will take up with some religious crotchet and treat you to sour looks thence-forward. So, in one way or another, life forces men apart and breaks up the goodly fellowships for ever. Marriage is certainly a perilous remedy. Instead of on two or three, you stake your happiness on one life only. But still, as the bargain is more explicit and complete on your part, it is more so on the other; and you have not to fear so many contingencies; it is not every wind that can blow you from your anchorage; and so long as Death withholds his sickle, you will always have a friend at home. People who share a cell in the Bastile, or are thrown together on an uninhabited isle, if they do not immediately fall to fisticuffs, will find some possible ground of compromise. The discretion of the first years becomes the settled habit of the last; and so, with wisdom and patience, two lives may grow indissolubly into one. But marriage, if comfortable, is not at all heroic. It certainly narrows and damps the spirits of generous men. In marriage, a man becomes slack and selfish, and undergoes a fatty degeneration of his moral being. It is not only when Lydgate misallies himself with Rosamond Vincy, but when Ladislaw marries above him with Dorothea, that this may be exemplified. He is so comfortable and happy that he begins to prefer comfort and happiness to everything else on earth, his wife included. Yesterday he would have shared his last shilling; to-day "his first duty is to his family," and is fulfilled in large measure by laying down vintages and husbanding the health of an invaluable parent. Twenty years ago this man was equally capable of crime or heroism; now he is fit for neither. His soul is asleep, and you may speak without constraint; you will not wake him. It is not for nothing that Don Quixote was a bachelor and Marcus Aurelius married ill. For women, there is less of this danger. Marriage is of so much use to a woman, opens out to her so much more of life, and puts her in the way of so much more freedom and usefulness, that, whether she marry ill or well, she can hardly miss some benefit. It is true, however, that some of the merriest and most genuine of women are old maids; and that those old maids, and wives who are unhappily married, have often most of the true motherly touch. And this would seem to show, even for women, some narrowing influence in comfortable married life. But the rule is none the less certain: I am often filled with wonder that so many marriages are passably successful, and so few come to open failure, the more so as I fail to understand the principle on which people regulate their choice. I see women marrying indiscriminately with staring burgesses and ferret-faced, white-eyed boys, and men dwell in contentment with noisy scullions, or taking into their lives acidulous vestals. It is a common answer to say the good people marry because they fall in love; and of course you may use and misuse a word as much as you please, if you have the world along with you. But love is at least a somewhat hyperbolic expression for such luke-warm preference. It is not here, anyway, that Love employs his golden shafts; he cannot be said, with any fitness of language, to reign here and revel. Indeed, if this be love at all, it is plain the poets have been fooling with mankind since the foundation of the world. And you have only to look these

happy couples in the face, to see they have never been in love, or in hate, or in any other high passion, all their days. When you see a dish of fruit at dessert, you sometimes set your affections upon one particular peach or nectarine, watch it with some anxiety as it comes round the table, and feel quite a sensible disappointment when it is taken by some one else. I have used the phrase "high passion. A young man was telling me the sweet story of his loves. A married lady was debating the subject with another lady. You wonder whether it was so always; whether desire was always equally dull and spiritless, and possession equally cold. I cannot help fancying most people make, ere they marry, some such table of recommendations as Hannah Godwin wrote to her brother William anent her friend, Miss Gay. It is so charmingly comical, and so pat to the occasion, that I must quote a few phrases. She has a pleasing voice, with which she accompanies her musical instrument with judgment. She has an easy politeness in her manners, neither free nor reserved. She is a good housekeeper and a good economist, and yet of a generous disposition. As to her internal accomplishments, I have reason to speak still more highly of them: To deal plainly, if they only married when they fell in love, most people would die unwed; and among the others, there would be not a few tumultuous households. The Lion is the King of Beasts, but he is scarcely suitable for a domestic pet. In the same way, I suspect love is rather too violent a passion to make, in all cases, a good domestic sentiment. Just as some people are malicious in drink, or brawling and virulent under the influence of religious feeling, some are moody, jealous, and exacting when they are in love, who are honest, downright, good-hearted fellows enough in the everyday affairs and humours of the world. How then, seeing we are driven to the hypothesis that people choose in comparatively cold blood, how is it they choose so well? One is almost tempted to hint that it does not much matter whom you marry; that, in fact, marriage is a subjective affection, and if you have made up your mind to it, and once talked yourself fairly over, you could "pull it through" with anybody. But even if we take matrimony at its lowest, even if we regard it as no more than a sort of friendship recognised by the police, there must be degrees in the freedom and sympathy realised, and some principle to guide simple folk in their selection. Now what should this principle be? Are there no more definite rules than are to be found in the Prayer-book? Law and religion forbid the bans on the ground of propinquity or consanguinity; society steps in to separate classes; and in all this most critical matter, has common sense, has wisdom, never a word to say? In the absence of more magisterial teaching, let us talk it over between friends: In all that concerns eating and drinking, company, climate, and ways of life, community of taste is to be sought for. It would be trying, for instance, to keep bed and board with an early riser or a vegetarian. In matters of art and intellect, I believe it is of no consequence. Certainly it is of none in the companionships of men, who will dine more readily with one who has a good heart, a good cellar, and a humorous tongue, than with another who shares all their favourite hobbies and is melancholy withal. If your wife likes Tupper, that is no reason why you should hang your head. She thinks with the majority, and has the courage of her opinions. I have always suspected public taste to be a mongrel product, out of affectation by dogmatism; and felt sure, if you could only find an honest man of no special literary bent, he would tell you he thought much of Shakespeare bombastic and most absurd, and all of him written in very obscure English and wearisome to read. And not long ago I was able to lay by my lantern in content, for I found the honest man. He was a fellow of parts, quick, humorous, a clever painter, and with an eye for certain poetical effects of sea and ships. I am not much of a judge of that kind of thing, but a sketch of his comes before me sometimes at night. How strong, supple, and living the ship seems upon the billows! With what a dip and rake she shears the flying sea! I cannot fancy the man who saw this effect, and took it on the wing with so much force and spirit, was what you call commonplace in the last recesses of the heart. And yet he thought, and was not ashamed to have it known of him, that Ouida was better in every way than William Shakespeare. If there were more people of his honesty, this would be about the staple of lay criticism. It is not taste that is plentiful, but courage that is rare. And what have we in place? How many, who think no otherwise than the young painter, have we not heard disbursing second-hand hyperboles? Have you never turned sick at heart, O best of critics! Enthusiasm about art is become a function of the average female being, which she performs with precision and a sort of haunting sprightliness, like an ingenious and well-regulated machine. When you remember that, you will be tempted to put things strongly, and say you will marry no one who is not like George the Second, and cannot state openly a distaste for poetry and painting. The word "facts"

is, in some ways, crucial. Try as I might, I could get no nearer the principle of their division. What was essential to them, seemed to me trivial or untrue. We could come to no compromise as to what was, or what was not, important in the life of man. Turn as we pleased, we all stood back to back in a big ring, and saw another quarter of the heavens, with different mountain-tops along the sky-line and different constellations overhead. We had each of us some whimsy in the brain, which we believed more than anything else, and which discoloured all experience to its own shade. How would you have people agree, when one is deaf and the other blind? Now this is where there should be community between man and wife. For there are differences which no habit nor affection can reconcile, and the Bohemian must not intermarry with the Pharisee. Imagine Consuelo as Mrs. Samuel Budget, the wife of the successful merchant! The best of men and the best of women may sometimes live together all their lives, and, for want of some consent on fundamental questions, hold each other lost spirits to the end. A certain sort of talent is almost indispensable for people who would spend years together and not bore themselves to death. But the talent, like the agreement, must be for and about life. To dwell happily together, they should be versed in the niceties of the heart, and born with a faculty for willing compromise. The woman must be talented as a woman, and it will not much matter although she is talented in nothing else. And it is more important that a person should be a good gossip, and talk pleasantly and smartly of common friends and the thousand and one nothings of the day and hour, than that she should speak with the tongues of men and angels; for a while together by the fire, happens more frequently in marriage than the presence of a distinguished foreigner to dinner. You could read Kant by yourself, if you wanted; but you must share a joke with some one else. You can forgive people who do not follow you through a philosophical disquisition; but to find your wife laughing when you had tears in your eyes, or staring when you were in a fit of laughter, would go some way towards a dissolution of the marriage.

Chapter 2 : Virginibus puerisque | Open Library

Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers has 24 ratings and 5 reviews. Lorelei said: Among my collection of better known Robert Louis Stevenson books, I cam.

He was christened Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson. At about age 18, he changed the spelling of "Lewis" to "Louis", and he dropped "Balfour" in Stevenson inherited a tendency to coughs and fevers, exacerbated when the family moved to a damp, chilly house at 1 Inverleith Terrace in Illness was a recurrent feature of his adult life and left him extraordinarily thin. His nurse Alison Cunningham known as Cummy [14] was more fervently religious. Her mix of Calvinism and folk beliefs were an early source of nightmares for the child, and he showed a precocious concern for religion. He was a late reader, learning at age 7 or 8, but even before this he dictated stories to his mother and nurse, [19] and he compulsively wrote stories throughout his childhood. His father was proud of this interest; he had also written stories in his spare time until his own father found them and told him to "give up such nonsense and mind your business. A Page of History, During his many absences he was taught by private tutors. In October , he went to Edinburgh Academy , an independent school for boys, and stayed there sporadically for about fifteen months. In the autumn of , he spent one term at an English boarding school at Spring Grove in Isleworth in Middlesex now an urban area of West London. He showed from the start no enthusiasm for his studies and devoted much energy to avoiding lectures. He enjoyed the travels more for the material they gave for his writing than for any engineering interest. To provide some security, it was agreed that Stevenson should read Law again at Edinburgh University and be called to the Scottish bar. In the afternoon of time A strenuous family dusted from its hands The sand of granite, and beholding far Along the sounding coast its pyramids And tall memorials catch the dying sun, Smiled well content, and to this childish task Around the fire addressed its evening hours. In other respects too, Stevenson was moving away from his upbringing. His dress became more Bohemian ; he already wore his hair long, but he now took to wearing a velveteen jacket and rarely attended parties in conventional evening dress. Questioning his son about his beliefs, he discovered the truth, leading to a long period of dissension with both parents: As my father said "You have rendered my whole life a failure". As my mother said "This is the heaviest affliction that has ever befallen me". O Lord, what a pleasant thing it is to have damned the happiness of probably the only two people who care a damn about you in the world. Early writing and travels[edit] Stevenson c. Sitwell was a year-old woman with a son, who was separated from her husband. She attracted the devotion of many who met her, including Colvin, who married her in Stevenson was also drawn to her, and they kept up a heated correspondence over several years in which he wavered between the role of a suitor and a son he addressed her as "Madonna". Stephen took Stevenson to visit a patient at the Edinburgh Infirmary named William Ernest Henley , an energetic and talkative man with a wooden leg. Henley became a close friend and occasional literary collaborator, until a quarrel broke up the friendship in , and he is often considered to be the model for Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*. He returned in better health in April and settled down to his studies, but he returned to France several times after that. He also traveled to Paris to visit galleries and the theatres. His law studies did influence his books, but he never practised law; [37] all his energies were spent in travel and writing. One of his journeys was a canoe voyage in Belgium and France with Sir Walter Simpson, a friend from the Speculative Society, a frequent travel companion, and the author of *The Art of Golf* This trip was the basis of his first travel book *An Inland Voyage* She had married at age 17 and moved to Nevada to rejoin husband Samuel after his participation in the American Civil War. Their children were Isobel or "Belle" , Lloyd , and Hervey who died in In , she had taken her children to France where she and Isobel studied art. Stevenson spent much of the following year with her and her children in France. But he set off to join her in August , against the advice of his friends and without notifying his parents. He took second-class passage on the steamship *Devonia* , in part to save money but also to learn how others traveled and to increase the adventure of the journey. He later wrote about the experience in *The Amateur Emigrant*. It was good experience for his writing, but it broke his health. French Hotel now " Stevenson House " , Monterey, California where he stayed in He was near death when he arrived

in Monterey, California , where some local ranchers nursed him back to health. He stayed for a time at the French Hotel located at Houston Street, now a museum dedicated to his memory called the " Stevenson House ". While there, he often dined "on the cuff," as he said, at a nearby restaurant run by Frenchman Jules Simoneau which stood at what is now Simoneau Plaza; several years later, he sent Simoneau an inscribed copy of his novel *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* , writing that it would be a stranger case still if Robert Louis Stevenson ever forgot Jules Simoneau. By December , Stevenson had recovered his health enough to continue to San Francisco where he struggled "all alone on forty-five cents a day, and sometimes less, with quantities of hard work and many heavy thoughts," [43] in an effort to support himself through his writing. Fanny was now divorced and recovered from her own illness, and she came to his bedside and nursed him to recovery. Fanny and Robert were married in May , although he said that he was "a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom. He wrote about this experience in *The Silverado Squatters*. In August , he sailed with Fanny and Lloyd from New York to Britain and found his parents and his friend Sidney Colvin on the wharf at Liverpool , happy to see him return home. Gradually, his wife was able to patch up differences between father and son and make herself a part of the family through her charm and wit. He spent his summers at various places in Scotland and England, including Westbourne, Dorset , a residential area in Bournemouth. Poole after the town of Poole which is situated next to Bournemouth. In Westbourne, he named his house Skerryvore after the tallest lighthouse in Scotland, which his uncle Alan had built " But though you will be angry to hear it, I believe, for myself at least, what is best. *Treasure Island* was published under the pseudonym "Captain George North" and became his first widely popular book; he wrote it during this time, along with *Kidnapped* , *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* which established his wider reputation , *The Black Arrow*: He gave a copy of *Kidnapped* to his friend and frequent Skerryvore visitor Henry James. During the intensely cold winter, Stevenson wrote some of his best essays, including *Pulvis et Umbra*. He also began *The Master of Ballantrae* and lightheartedly planned a cruise to the southern Pacific Ocean for the following summer. His cousin and biographer Sir Graham Balfour said that "he probably throughout life would, if compelled to vote, have always supported the Conservative candidate. He wrote at age The vessel "plowed her path of snow across the empty deep, far from all track of commerce, far from any hand of help. During this period, he completed *The Master of Ballantrae* , composed two ballads based on the legends of the islanders, and wrote *The Bottle Imp*. He preserved the experience of these years in his various letters and in his *In the South Seas* which was published posthumously. Fanny misnames the ship in her account *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol*. He took the native name *Tusitala* Samoan for "Teller of Tales". His influence spread among the Samoans, who consulted him for advice, and he soon became involved in local politics. He was convinced that the European officials were incompetent who had been appointed to rule the Samoans, and he published *A Footnote to History* after many futile attempts to resolve the matter. This was such a stinging protest against existing conditions that it resulted in the recall of two officials, and Stevenson feared for a time that it would result in his own deportation. He wrote to Colvin, "I used to think meanly of the plumber; but how he shines beside the politician! Stevenson grew depressed and wondered if he had exhausted his creative vein, as he had been "overworked bitterly" [64] and that the best he could write was "ditch-water". He rebelled against this idea: To be drowned, to be shot, to be thrown from a horse " ay, to be hanged, rather than pass again through that slow dissolution. He was 44 years old. The Samoans insisted on surrounding his body with a watch-guard during the night and on bearing him on their shoulders to nearby Mount Vaea , where they buried him on a spot overlooking the sea on land donated by British Acting Vice Consul Thomas Trood. Glad did I live and gladly die, And I laid me down with a will. This be the verse you grave for me: Here he lies where he longed to be; Home is the sailor, home from sea, And the hunter home from the hill. Stevenson was loved by the Samoans, and his tombstone epigraph was translated to a Samoan song of grief. His heirs sold his papers during World War I, and many Stevenson documents were auctioned off in The Stevenson House museum is graced with a superb bas-relief depicting the sickly author writing in bed. Helena, California, is home to over 11, objects and artifacts, the majority of which belonged to Stevenson. Opened in , the museum houses such treasures as his childhood rocking chair, writing desk, toy soldiers, and personal writings among many other items. The museum is free to the public

and serves as an academic archive for students, writers, and Stevenson enthusiasts. The museum collection includes several original items belonging to Stevenson and his family. Bronze relief memorial of Stevenson in St. Stevenson spent the Summer of and wrote Treasure Island, his first great work". A garden was designed by the Bournemouth Corporation in as a memorial to Stevenson, on the site of his Westbourne house, "Skerryvore", which he occupied from to A statue of the Skerryvore lighthouse is present on the site. In the story line, Stevenson falls in love with Fanny Osbourne, played by Aline Towne , the mother of two children in a loveless marriage in San Francisco. The couple met in France where Stevenson was recuperating from health issues and moved to San Francisco, where Stevenson worked tirelessly despite lingering health matters in the production of his large volume of literary works. The first note to be printed was sent to Samoa in time for their centenary celebrations on 3 December Stevenson School in Pebble Beach, California , was established in and still exists as a college preparatory boarding school. This was also until recently changed the name of a restaurant on Comiston Road, Edinburgh on the route of a favourite walk that Stevenson often took to the village of Swanston in the Pentland Hills.

Chapter 3 : Virginibus Puerisque, and Other Papers by Stevenson, Robert Louis

Virginibus Puerisque is the titular essay of this collection of short writings by Robert Louis Stevenson. Because of the nature of the text as a compilation one cannot offer any sweeping analysis of the book as a whole, each essay is entirely self-contained.

El Dorado It seems as if a great deal were attainable in a world where there are so many marriages and decisive battles, and where we all, at certain hours of the day, and with great gusto and despatch, stow a portion of victuals finally and irretrievably into the bag which contains us. And yet, as regards the spirit, this is but a semblance. We live in an ascending scale when we live happily, one thing leading to another in an endless series. There is always a new horizon for onward-looking men, and although we dwell on a small planet, immersed in petty business and not enduring beyond a brief period of years, we are so constituted that our hopes are inaccessible, like stars, and the term of hoping is prolonged until the term of life. To be truly happy is a question of how we begin and not of how we end, of what we want and not of what we have. An aspiration is a joy for ever, a possession as solid as a landed estate, a fortune which we can never exhaust and which gives us year by year a revenue of pleasurable activity. To have many of these is to be spiritually rich. Life is only a very dull and ill-directed theatre unless we have some interests in the piece; and to those who have neither art nor science, the world is a mere arrangement of colours, or a rough footway where they may very well break their shins. It is in virtue of his own desires and curiosities that any man continues to exist with even patience, that he is charmed by the look of things and people, and that he wakens every morning with a renewed appetite for work and pleasure. Desire and curiosity are the two eyes through which he sees the world in the most enchanted colours: Suppose he could take one meal so compact and comprehensive that he should never hunger any more; suppose him, at a glance, to take in all the features of the world and allay the desire for knowledge; suppose him to do the like in any province of experience--would not that man be in a poor way for amusement ever after? One who goes touring on foot with a single volume in his knapsack reads with circumspection, pausing often to reflect, and often laying the book down to contemplate the landscape or the prints in the inn parlour; for he fears to come to an end of his entertainment, and be left companionless on the last stages of his journey. A young fellow recently finished the works of Thomas Carlyle, winding up, if we remember aright, with the ten note-books upon Frederick the Great. Am I left to the daily papers? Happily we all shoot at the moon with ineffectual arrows; our hopes are set on inaccessible El Dorado; we come to an end of nothing here below. Interests are only plucked up to sow themselves again, like mustard. You would think, when the child was born, there would be an end to trouble; and yet it is only the beginning of fresh anxieties; and when you have seen it through its teething and its education, and at last its marriage, alas! Again, when you have married your wife, you would think you were got upon a hilltop, and might begin to go downward by an easy slope. But you have only ended courting to begin marriage. Falling in love and winning love are often difficult tasks to overbearing and rebellious spirits; but to keep in love is also a business of some importance, to which both man and wife must bring kindness and goodwill. The true love story commences at the altar, when there lies before the married pair a most beautiful contest of wisdom and generosity, and a life-long struggle towards an unattainable ideal. Ay, surely unattainable, from the very fact that they are two instead of one. There is no end, indeed, to making books or experiments, or to travel, or to gathering wealth. Problem gives rise to problem. We may study for ever, and we are never as learned as we would. We have never made a statue worthy of our dreams. And when we have discovered a continent, or crossed a chain of mountains, it is only to find another ocean or another plain upon the further side. In the infinite universe there is room for our swiftest diligence and to spare. It is not like the works of Carlyle, which can be read to an end. Even in a corner of it, in a private park, or in the neighbourhood of a single hamlet, the weather and the seasons keep so deftly changing that although we walk there for a lifetime there will be always something new to startle and delight us. There is only one wish realisable on the earth; only one thing that can be perfectly attained: And from a variety of circumstances we have no one to tell us whether it be worth attaining. A strange picture we make on our way to our chimaeras, ceaselessly marching, grudging

ourselves the time for rest; indefatigable, adventurous pioneers. It is true that we shall never reach the goal; it is even more than probable that there is no such place; and if we lived for centuries and were endowed with the powers of a god, we should find ourselves not much nearer what we wanted at the end. O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither! Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way further, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessednes; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

Chapter 4 : Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers by Robert Louis Stevenson: Ch. 6: El Dorado

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

The essays promote a spirit of playfulness in defiance of both the hardships of human life and the restrictions imposed by bourgeois Philistinism. The volume did not sell well but had a good critical reception, confirming the author of *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* as one of the rising stars on the literary scene, notable for his youthful high spirits and elegant, if sometimes too showy, literary style. Women, however, receive through marriage more freedom and more opportunity. A digression speaks about the need to be honest in our taste, even when it goes against popularly approved taste, such as admitting an impatience with Shakespeare. To be happily married the couple must also be affectionate and willing to compromise, and must share the same sense of humour. Among a list of further characteristics indicating a good husband, drinking and smoking are most important since they tend to make a man content and sedentary. This advice is offered to amuse and entertain, but the one serious and essential point is not to expect marriage to produce an easy, peaceful life. This hope remains to us from our youth, and manifests itself especially in the way we continually hope we will conduct ourselves better in future. But we do not amend as we hope we will. Even marriage leaves us unchanged, despite our hopes that it would reform all the imperfections we saw in ourselves. In marriage, in fact, we now bring our own failings to bear not just on ourselves but on the very person we care most about. The spouse thus becomes the witness, judge and victim of our moral defeats. Misconceptions about the spouse are further increased through the catchwords we are taught, especially those portraying women as angelic. It is cowardly to retreat from marriage, even with all its obstacles. We need to hold fast to Faith in these matters. Faith knows there is both goodness and weakness in the spouse and prompts us to continue to try better in our marriage. We cannot control falling in love and not everyone can fall in love. Falling in love benefits a man by awakening, or reawakening, him to generous feelings: People in love imagine their love benefits everyone else and tend to look condescendingly towards others, including those who also are in love. The lover strives especially to benefit the beloved. Although we are constantly misunderstood by others, it becomes of utmost importance to be understood by our beloved. And yet for all this, in the end, each generation of lovers fades away into oblivion, with very little to show for its presence. To be proficient with words is not enough; we aim to communicate our emotions clearly and affect others the way we want to. We can pity the deaf and blind who cannot receive these clues from voice and body, but more to be pitied are those who cannot communicate their emotions through the voice and body and whose heart therefore cannot speak. Therefore the worst kind of person is the one who puts on a false front to the world and is condemned to live alone and unloved. There are also lies true to fact but false to sentiment. The listener too has a responsibility here, and must be careful not to let emotions or preconceptions distort what is being heard. Between old friends and lovers, only the merest word or phrase is needed, and much is conveyed through the body, beyond the power of words to express. If a doubt should arise in these intimacies, then the confidence in the other is destroyed. Still, where there is strong affection such difficulties can be overcome, especially because the heart of the other person is ready to forgive. In the end, being understood lies in our own power: And even though cautious proverbs are promoted, it is the incautious, risk-taking characters in history who get the general praise "so long as no one actually imitates their actions. Similarly, the opinions of the old are valued over those of the young, even though the old may be as disenchanting with life as the young are enchanted by it. Both views, however, can be valid. No opinion or theory lasts our whole life or offers anything more than an impression amidst the confusion of life. Youth may understand the precautions of age but will not choose to follow them, nor should it. It makes no sense to be prudent in youth when we do not know what sort of future may be in store. Much better to open ourselves into whatever views come our way at any given time. Youthful experimenting and adventuring would seem the most prudent way to prepare for age after all. Thus all argument "even the present argument" cannot be certain, and the best we can

hope is to agree to differ. Age more often regrets missed opportunities to play truant than missed opportunities to work. Busy people often have no curiosity, and no generosity to enjoy a thing for what it is, apart from its usefulness. Travel there stimulates the invalid, and the shift from the harsh north to the mild south prompts hopes for enjoyment. Once settled, however, the invalid realises that though the surroundings are as beautiful as he anticipated, he is no longer able to enjoy them. At first he thinks the scenery may be too soft to revive his emotions and longs again for the stimulating hardness of a northern winter, but then he remembers how miserable that northern weather actually can be. Occasional unexpected small details will bring welcome joy to the invalid. Such moments of joy arise from the inexplicable arrangements of external and internal elements. He will wish for an early death rather than a continuation of this partial living. Yet many things still attach the invalid to life: Note added in An older man sees the prospect of impending death differently. He has a greater sense of the loss his death will bring to others he is tied to by love or duty, and a regret at what he has not yet accomplished and what he might have made of his life had he lived longer. And yet, this great fear of death does not much influence everyday life. Every moment of life is perilous, and yet we carry on with life regardless of the perils. When it comes to happiness, however, it is never possible to attain our goal, and yet we continually strive for happiness. Happiness can be found only in the process of seeking happiness, not in any final happiness itself. Despite the misery that occurred between decks, stories of great naval battles give us our most moving tales of heroism. Examples from naval history show English admirals coolly disregarding personal safety in the face of danger, preferring the extravagant gesture to mere businesslike actions. We are moved by delight in doing the thing itself. A Raeburn portrait shows the subject unself-consciously busy in a world of his or her own. Not everything about the exhibition is excellent. Some of the paintings are not equal to the others, and the hands of the sitters are carelessly depicted so that one pair of hands is not sufficiently distinguished from the others. But then, the artificial ways young men and women have to act together when they meet socially make it impossible to understand each other or depict each other justly in art. But though adults live closer to the world of fact, they have lost the ability to weave imaginative enchantments over the world. A child cannot construct a story in the imagination but has to act out the story, either in person, improvising with ordinary items to hand, or by proxy with toy soldiers or other toys. The child can do this in spite of whatever else may be going on around him, intersecting but not joining that adult world. This way of playing is not an act of imagination but an enactment of stories adults have already imagined. In this way, relatively inexperienced in the world, children try out and experiment with ways of doing things. These activities are not as pleasant for adults, though, who can stir up uncomfortable memories, especially of times their own conduct had fallen short. Nor do adults act out their fantasies as children do, especially because the adult mind is not content with substitutions for the real things. Adults should thus spare children their innocent playing just a little while longer. For who knows what a rough, warfaring existence lies before them in the future? Pushing oneself too far instead of enjoying each different experience destroys the pleasure. To enjoy a walking tour properly one should walk alone, to be able to choose when to stop and start and where to go next. The walker should be free to follow whatever whim dictates. The first few days of the walking tour can be oppressive, but they are followed by an easiness, unless the walker insists on mulling over anxious thoughts. The easiness can take a variety of forms, like singing or skipping, that would be embarrassing if anyone noticed. Stopping points along the way allow the walker to sink into a timeless oblivion. The Greek myth of Pan, however, expresses much of our human experience because the myth includes in itself the contradictions we find in the world. Pan is a figure of both terror and glee. For youthful minds Pan is not dead. The explanations of science, true in their way, do not always answer our experience of life. Hand-held lanterns only partially satisfied this need. Gas lamps were a great improvement. They were not as clear or steady as the moon and stars, and needed lamplighters to light them each evening and extinguish them each morning. But the lamplighters became known for their zeal and punctuality, and delighted children especially. This section was provided by Robert-Louis Abrahamson. This entry was posted in Essays.

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